

Allah is the Light of the heavens and the Earth. The similitude of His light is as a niche, wherein is a lamp. The lamp is in a crystal globe. The globe is bright as it were a glittering star lamp lit from a blessed olive tree neither of the occident nor of the orient, whose oil would well-nigh glow forth even though fire touched it not. Light upon light! Allah guides to His light whosoever He wills. Allah sets forth parables for people, and Allah knows all things completely.

Glowing forth from houses for which Allah ordained that they be exalted and that His name be commemorated in them. Glorify Him therein in the mornings and the evenings.

Men whom neither trade nor commerce makes oblivious of the remembrance of Allah and the observance of Worship and the giving of the prescribed Alms. They fear a day in which hearts and eyes will be agitated.

So that Allah may give them the best reward for their actions and give them even more out of His bounty for Allah doth provide for whomsoever He pleases without measure.

The Holy Quran. Al Nur [The Light]: 36 - 39

FREE YOURSELVES FROM RACIAL OR CASTE PREJUDICES

Ahmadiyyat Teaches Universal Brotherhood

Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II

[A Friday Sermon of Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmood Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih II (may Allah be pleased with him). This sermon was delivered on April 19, 1935, at Qadian, India.]

The real object of all prophets' missions is to do away with differences of race and colour. The Light given by them to the world is neither of the East, nor of the West, but of the heavens. We cannot attribute a fixed abode to Almighty God. He belongs neither to the East, nor to the West, to the North, nor to the South. He is the all-pervading Light of heaven and earth. This is the central pivot of all prophets' teachings. As long as it endures in a people they go on advancing towards success and power. When a people forget this teaching they develop dissensions among themselves and go down a declining path. Hearts only divide with the coming on of an idea of duality, with the idea of more than one thing existing side by side. But if there is neither East, nor West, and there is only Almighty God, who is the Light of the heavens and the earth pervading the East and the West, the North and the South, and in fact in all space throughout this universe of ours, how can questions of nationality or clan arise between man and man. In the time of the Holy Prophet of Arabia ideas of tribal superiority and differentiation of social status were at their high water mark. The Holy Prophet worked such a reformation, that it is being openly avowed today, that the untouchables can only be assimilated by the Muslims, in spite of the fact that Muslims have again adopted ideas of caste and feelings of racial pride from the Hindus and Christians.

ISLAM: A NEW BIRTH

While Islam has done away with racial or tribal pride, there are men who are so much possessed by these prejudices that they would not willingly let them die out. Islam or Ahmadiyyat is the name of a

new birth. Every one who enters the fold of Islam or Ahmadiyyat annihilates his former self and is born over again in Islam. He abandons his ancestry and his kith and kin, and sacrificing everything takes a new lease of life. He is the offspring of Islam and all Muslims are to him as his brothers and sisters. Can you think of any difference between the children of the same parents? However much an Englishman may take pride in his nationality on account of the extent and power of the British Empire, it cannot be gainsaid that on accepting Islam he is expected to leave his national pride behind and to consider himself a brother of his fellow Muslims. A Brahmin embracing Islam is expected to consider himself only a Muslim. Similarly an Indian, an Afghan, a Chinese, Japanese, or a Russian, when he becomes a Muslim, he forgets his nationality. It does not mean that he is no longer a patriot, the Holy Prophet has said that patriotism is a part of the faith. Islam asks us to be particularly solicitous for our neighbours' good. If an Afghan, a Chinese or a Japanese works for the good of his people, he is only following the dictates of Islam provided he confines his enthusiasm to the removing of moral evils and to improving the depressed condition of his fellows. If he goes forward to make invidious distinctions on the ground of nationality between an Englishman and an Indian, a Japanese or a Chinese, he trespasses upon the limits placed by Islam upon the sentiment of race and tribe.

SERVANTS OF ALLAH

God has given us the Light brought by the Holy Prophet of Arabia, through the Promised Messiah who requires us to be servants of God only, and not to give ourselves away to a racial or territorial sentiment which has been responsible for so much international rivalry. You cannot be a true Muslim as long as you nurse such a pride in your heart. The ideal of Islam is to establish a brotherhood in the world. You cannot reconcile racial or provincial pride with the idea of a universal brotherhood. This would be like serving two opposite ideals at the same time. Having been Ahmadi, if you are prey to such a self-contradictory sentiment, it means that you saw the Light, but instead of deriving any benefit out of it, you allowed it to scorch your eyes, as it is well known that brilliant light brightens as well as scorches things. Now therefore, as you from all parts of India are before me, (and people from Sumatra and Java too are always ordinarily among us), I ask you to let such distinctions die out from

among us. I have been led to say to you these things because of some recent happenings in which two provinces particularly, viz., Bengal and the Frontier have played a part. I do not think it fit to apportion blame between them, but I cannot help saying that Ahmadiyyat cannot make its home in a heart which is at the same time nursing a provincial sentiment. I have always tried to suppress this question whenever it has been pointedly raised before me. I can say for myself, (and God surely is aware of it) that I have never considered myself a Punjabi, and I have always thought that on accepting Islam one breaks through the bonds of caste or tribe and becomes a simple Muslim. When Ahmadiyyat spreads throughout the world it will surely end racial or tribal pride and do away with provincial jealousies. This is the great object for the realisation of which every honest Ahmadi is expected to put in his best efforts. If we fail to achieve this object it will surely mean that we committed unpardonable default in the discharge of our responsibilities.

SUCCESSION OF WAVES

Natural phenomena will tell you that in the case of an advancing people, every succeeding wave is stronger than the one before it. Do you not see how one hillock gives place to higher and higher hills till we come across very high mountains. A windstorm which carries away the rooftops of houses is only a gust of wind in the beginning. The alternation of hot and cold weather is also gradual, one warm day succeeding by a still warmer day, and one cold day followed by a still colder day, till there is the height of warm or cold weather. By the same law of nature Islam, rising as a first wave, was carried by Muslims to a point when the principle of brotherhood was established in the world. Now God has raised Ahmadiyyat as the second gust of wind, and it is our bounden duty that we should work to do away with what remains of the feeling of racial superiority. We should, therefore, be content to style ourselves Ahmadis, and should not emphasise provincial or racial differences by drawing distinctions between a Bengali and a Frontiersman. Had it been a natural sentiment, why should it not have been present in me. People from all parts of India, from far and near, come to me, but never for a second has there been in me any trace of the feeling of racial differences between them and myself. We only style a person a Bengali, a Punjabi or a *Sarhadi*, because it is sometimes necessary to point out the land from where he hails. Otherwise I do not see that as human beings a Bengali is

different from a Punjabi. I only notice Ahmadiyyat in every face.

DIFFICULT TIMES AHEAD

I tell you that we are face to face with difficult times. As long as you do not change the courses of your lives, and do not take, as it were, a new birth, success cannot be yours. I sometimes wonder how great is the difference between the thoughts of one man and another. From the point of view from which I look upon the world, there is a hell of opposition raging through the world. The mischief-making of the Ahrars you will say? Surely not. It is the greater and more formidable opposition of evil and sin, to eradicate which the Promised Messiah came with a heavenly mission. The Ahrars have only cropped up today, but the Promised Messiah was sent by God many years ago to eradicate the evils of this world. I am at a loss to understand why our community is unable to notice these evils. We shall surely forget all our little racial differences, if every member of our community becomes aware of the extent and strength of those evils.

LOVE AND HATRED

When a house is on fire, no one likes to quarrel for ordinary things. Many a time has it happened that mothers have trampled upon babies while trying to escape from a picture-hall on fire. When one is face to face with a calamity, petty distinctions based on love and hatred disappear. When all apparent distinctions vanish in the case of a cinema-hall or a dinner hall on fire, to wrangle over such small matters as a particular person being elected a president or an Amir, in face of the great hell-fire of opposing evils of the world, is so petty a thing that I do not like even to mention it. I then wonder whether we have not yet wrought in us the change which Ahmadiyyat intended to work among us? What has our Holy Founder given us? Not the riches of this world but one and only one thing, that is God.

OLIVE OIL LAMP

The verses that I have recited in the beginning show that a Muslim's mind is illuminated by the oil of the olive tree, which is neither of the East nor of the West, meaning thereby that a man in whom burns the light of that oil cast asunder the bonds of racial superiority. But a person who is still subject to such racial prejudices

and is not free from a local sentiment can only be said not to have attained the Light which God wishes to kindle in a Muslim's breast. Eradicate these narrow ideas, and consider yourselves only Ahmadis--nay, Ibadullah or the servants of Allah, as we call ourselves Ahmadis only in contradistinction from the other people. In point of fact we are the servants of Allah, and as such we cannot be masters of anything, on the other hand everything belongs to God. The Quran is explicit on this point. It says that God has requisitioned your lives and your property. Lives comprise relations, friends, etc. and the other possessions come under property. Both these are taken away by God from you, why should you thus wrangle over this and that things belonging to this or that person, or indulge in petty quarrels on the election of a president or a secretary in the community?

GREAT RESPONSIBILITY

We should all forget such insignificant things. There is a stupendous task before us. You know how difficult is it to mend the ways of an erring child. We have to reform countless men--men who are superior to us in wealth, power, honour and rank, men who have a hand in the administration and who wield an influence over the people. How great, under such circumstances, should be our effort. We should be mad with enthusiasm. In spite of this some of us are in a complacent mood as if they have conquered the world and have now nothing to do. I have said it many a time to you that there is no peace in store for you. If you want an abiding peace hereafter, you will have to sacrifice the comforts of this world. There is a heavy programme before us. The work is already in progress and only a few days' reports show that if all the Ahmadis devote themselves to this work we shall, in spite of the world, scale the highest peak of progress in a very short time. *Tabligh* reports from different places show that, as an enemy is throwing stones on Ahmadis, the former is all the time feeling a prick of conscience and is terror-stricken. He meets our men in private and tells them that he has been a fool to cause them harm. From among these very oppressors there come out those men who say that the Ahmadis are being highly tyrannised these days, oppression is not an ordinary affair. Extreme of love may be possible, but not an extreme of oppression.

ABIDING HEAVEN

I notice that a great change is taking place although work has been started only in a few places. How long men will shut their eyes against the Great Light brought by the Promised Messiah? There will most certainly come a day when they will accept that Light. Taking an example from the acts of God we see that there can be an extreme of love for God but not of sin or spiritual blindness. That is why there is the promise of an abiding heaven, but there is no promise of an abiding hell as a punishment for spiritual blindness. The reward for love and mercy is unlimited but the punishment for oppression and tyranny is not unlimited. This only proves that we can carry love to an extreme but not oppression.

THE NEW SCHEME

I have thought of a plan to extend the scope of the new scheme. The plan is this. On one Friday in every month, the sermon should only deal with the new scheme and while preparing the members of the community for greater sacrifices attempt should be made to foster in them a desire to do virtuous deeds and to live righteous lives. The different parts of the scheme should be dealt with one by one in different sermons. There is another plan. I propose that local communities should hold six-monthly meetings, at which speeches should be made on the different items of the scheme. I have fixed May 26, as the appropriate day for this object this year, as the death anniversary of the Promised Messiah will lead our men to discharge their responsibilities with greater enthusiasm. Speeches should be delivered on such topics as, for instance, the need of promoting love and amity between the members, the paying up of arrears of their contributions, the sending of children to Qadian for education and religious instruction, preparation of the community for money contributions next year. These items of the scheme have been printed and a chart too has been prepared, which you should hang in your rooms in order to keep it constantly before your eyes. The scheme also includes a proposal to the effect that men should deposit their savings in the Trust Fund. I have proposed such meetings, because some men understand a thing more readily from one of themselves. Some who do not read the newspapers of the community will thereby become aware of the scheme. If the sermon on one Friday in a month be devoted to the explaining and reminding of the items of the scheme, and indivi-

duals should devote their lives to *Tabligh*, with a persistence and perseverance, the evils, to eradicate which I have made this scheme, will be done away with very soon, and in six or seven months time a new order may possibly be ushered into the world.

PRAYER

I pray to God that He may reform the individuals of our community, and He may make them realise that every second that is being wasted, will entangle us in great difficulties and will be the cause of injuring Islam irreparably.

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"And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the diversity of your tongue and colors. In that surely are Signs for those who possess knowledge."

(The Holy Quran, 30:23)

"O mankind, We have created you from a male and a female; and We have made you into tribes and sub-tribes that you may recognize one another. Verily, the most honorable among you, in the sight of Allah, is he who is the most righteous among you. Surely, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware."

(The Holy Quran, 49:14)